DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 650 RC 016 460

AUTHOR	Warden, Judy E.
TITLE	Establishing Partnerships between the Business Community and Rural Schools.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Las Cruces, N. Mex.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	86
CONTRACT	400-83-0023
NOTE	4p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071))
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Business Responsibility; *Community Benefits; Community Resources; Cooperative Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; Financial Support; *Private Financial Support; Rural Development; *Rural Education; *Rural Schools; *School Business Relationship; School Funds; *School Support
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests; *Partnerships in Education

ABSTRACT

An effective way to help develop a strong rural educational program is to establish a business partnership between the rural school and the business community. Once a relationship is set up, the advantages for both the schools and business community could prove beneficial to the entire rural community. By cooperating with the rural schools in developing strong career and educational programs, the rural business community may not have to depend upon outside skilled help. Large businesses which form partnerships with rural schools are assuring their own future with the knowledge that the future work force may be the finished product of their involvement in quality education. Partnerships may be formed because of the mutual desire to improve the quality of education, the need to uplift the morale of the educational system and the rural community regarding education, or the school's need for financial funding. A partnership can be initiated by either a school or a business, but successful business-school partnerships require total commitment from both parties. (JHZ)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

RURAL EDUCATION

ED287650

Establishing Partnerships Between the Business Community and Rural Schools

by

Judy E. Warden

1986

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

RC016460

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC® CLEARINGHOUSE ON RURAL EDUCATION and SMALL SCHOOLS

ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND RURAL SCHOOLS

An effective way to help develop a strong rural educational program is to establish a business partnership between the rural school and the business community. Once a relationship is set up, the advantages for both the schools and business community could prove beneficial to the entire rural community. For a partnership between a business and a school to work, each party must be willing to define its specific needs and demonstrate a desire to make the partnership work.

What is a school-business partnership?

Generally defined, a partnership is a mutual agreement between a business and a school to establish certain goals, and to construct a reasonable means of achieving those goals. The term "school-business partnership" is distinguished from the "adopt a school" concept by the fact that a true school business partnership is not an inner-city program geared toward helping only disadvantaged students. The present trend of school-business partnerships is focusing on helping to improve the overall educational system and perhaps aid in community development as well.

What kinds of partnerships exist?

The types of partnerships that are formed between a school and a business depend on what each party hopes to achieve. The objectives of each party will determine whether the type of partnership will be directly involved in the overall school program or whether it will be indirectly involved, or involved in just a specific area of the school program. Some school-business partnerships are only partnerships in the sense that both parties desire that the relationship be as uncomplicated as possible. In this kind of partnership the business might provide funds and equipment for the school program while the school may reciprocate by publicly giving credit to the business. Another type of partnership is the long-term partnership and is usually more complex in nature. The long-term partnerships usually have well-defined purposes and both parties work closely together to accomplish their objectives. These partnerships often provide programs to help enrich the school programs such as sending professional business people to teach mini-courses. Long-term partnerships are frequently concerned with developing enriching career educational programs and providing on-the-job training.

How can partnerships be effective for the rural school?

Along with today's emphasis on effective education also comes the constant pressure of budget cutbacks of public education funds. Forming a strong school-business partnership can help ease some of the budget woes and permit the business community to take responsibility for the quality of education, and can make the transition from school to work easier. Rural schools frequently do not have the monies for new equipment or innovative teaching projects. Partnerships can help supply funds and professional expertise for hands-on projects or pilot programs which the rural school budget may not be able to cover but which the school desires to incorporate into its curriculum. An example of this might be an agreement between a local bank and a school to stimulate life skill activities as motivating factors to achieving learning objectives. Often businesses can provide workshops for students and staff, provide up-to-date equipment, or provide direct on-the-job training. Many partnerships are formed because both the rural school and business community find themselves concerned about the lack of rural career enrichment programs. With budget cuts and the increased attention being given to the back-to-basics movement, schools are finding that they have to decide whether they can afford to include arts and humanities in their curriculum. Rural educators who are concerned about the importance of arts and humanities to students' overall educational and cultural growth should look toward possible partnerships to fulfill this need.

Arts and humanities programs frequently discover they need to bring in outside instructional resources. Again, partnerships can fill that void by functioning as a liaison for the school and a cultural center, for example. With the support of a partnership, schools can encourage teachers to work closely with cultural centers to stimulate student creativeness.

How can business benefit from the school business partnership?

While we can say that a good partnership might be invaluable to the rural school, the same can be said for the business community. By cooperating with the rural schools in developing strong career and educational programs, the rural business community may not have to depend upon outside skilled help. Large businesses which form partnerships with rural schools are assuring their own future with the knowledge that the future work force may be the finished product of their involvement in quality education.

Why are partnerships formed?

- Mutual desire to improve the quality of education

Rural schools are usually too small to offer a large variety of educational services. Too often, enriching activities such as field trips and special workshops are not available to rural schools. The reasons for this vary such as lack of funding, lack of facilities, or simply a lack of qualified staff. In order to give rural school students the same opportunity for quality education which is available to many urban schools, outside resources should be considered. A good partnership can bring in a wide range of fields and professionals to satisfy the need and contribute to the broadening of rural students' social and career perspectives.

- A need to uplift the morale of the educational system and the rural community regarding education

While the back-to-basics movement itself may not be a hard subject to deal with, recent criticism of public education has to some extent, taken its toll on school and community morale. The business community can play a vital role in uplifting the morale of both the eucational system and the community by being involved in the whole school program. Partnerships can function as a liaison in the improvement of community-school programs.

- The school's need for financial funding

Rural schools with a budget that usually just covers the bare necessities can benefit by the formation of a good partnership. Outdated school equipment can be replaced with modern equipment with monies from partnerships. Buildings, renovations, and computers are just a few extras that business partnerships could provide.

How can partnerships be formed?

A partnership can be initiated by either a school or a business. To form a partnership, communication must be established. Each party should be willing to take time to sit down and draw up a definite set of goals. The parties involved must be committed to the time and effort it takes to make a good partnership. Individuals should be selected from each side who are comfortable working outside their environment and who relate well with people. Business-school partnerships can be extremely rewarding--but to work, they need total commitment from both parties.

What are some successful examples of school-business partnerships?

- A good example of a rural community education program took place in a community in Iowa with two companies and the schools of that community. The main goal of that partnership was to give students education and experience in the computer field.
- In Virginia a partnership was set up with the Chesapeake Corporation of Virginia to solve the math teacher shortage. In this partnership business loaned engineers to schools to teach advanced math classes.
- A rural community in Utah formed a partnership to provide educational opportunities for students via a live telelearning network.
- Rural communities in North Carolina realized that they needed stronger mathematics and science programs, so partnerships were utilized to fill the void.
- Southern Georgia has the Marvin Pittman Laboratory School which works with schools in the development of new teaching approaches.

References

Clark, Donald M. *"Partnerships in Education -- The Latest Fad or A Long Term Solution to Education Reform."* ***Workplace Education*** (December 1984), pp. 8 and 17.

De Largy, Paul. *"Rural Schools and Community Education."* ***Small School Forum***, 2 (Spring 1981): 5-6.

Grimshaw, William F. ***Ensuring Excellence in Education for Rural America.*** Paper presented at the Rural Education Seminar, 3-5 May 1982, in Washington, DC. ED 216 840.

Lake, Sara. ***Partnerships in Education.*** Redwood City, CA: San Mateo Educational Resource Center (SMERC), December 1985.

Lick, Dale W. ***Rural School Partnerships with Higher Education and the Private Sector.*** Washington, DC: United States Department of Education, National Rural Education Forum, August 1985. ED 258 789.

"School Business Partnerships." ***Exemplary Practice Series.*** Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa, Center on Evaluation, Development and Research, 1985-1986.

Stainback, George H.; Winborne, Claiborne R.; and Davis, S. John. *"Our School/Business Partnership is a Smash."* ***American School Board Journal*** (September 1983): 42.

Prepared by

Judy E. Warden
Teacher
Las Cruces Public Schools
Las Cruces, New Mexico

1986

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education under contract no. NIE-400-83-0023. The opinions expressed in this digest do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.